

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 21-28, 30-32, 35-42, 45-47, 50-52, 55 and 57-61 are pending in the captioned application. The Examiner has required a restriction under 35 U.S.C. §121. Applicants elect, without traverse, to prosecute the invention of Group I, namely claims 21-22, 35, 45, 50 and 57-60, drawn to an isolated polypeptide, a pharmaceutical composition thereof, a diagnostic composition, and a fusion protein, classified in class 435, subclass 196. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application(s) on the non-elected group(s).

In view of the numerous applications to which priority is claimed, the Examiner has requested the Applicants indicate which, if any, of the priority applications discloses the elected invention to allow the Examiner to focus on more substantive issues in the examination of the application. In response, Applicants indicate United States patent application number 09/866,108 filed May 25, 2001, which is now United States Patent number 6,686,188. Additionally, Applicants indicate United States provisional patent application number 60/266,860 filed February 5, 2001.

In the interest of compact prosecution, the Examiner has suggested the Applicants update the status of United States patent application number 09/866,108 in the "Cross-Reference to Related Applications" section of the specification. In response, Applicants have amended paragraph one of the specification to indicate that United States patent application number 09/866,108 has issued as United States Patent number 6,686,188.

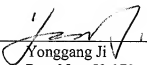
Appl. No. 10/723,361
Amendment dated June 23, 2006
Reply to Office action of May 31, 2006

Applicants respectfully assert that the claims are in allowable form and earnestly solicit the allowance of claims 21-22, 35, 45, 50 and 57-60.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being uploaded to the United States Patent and Trademark Office using the Electronic Filing System on June 23, 2006.

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